



Surrey Civilian-Military Partnership Board

Agenda

Council Chamber, Woodhatch Place, Cockshot Hill, Reigate RH2 8EF
10.00 am, Thursday, 18 April 2024

Please note this meeting is held in private and is not open for the public to attend. The papers are published on the website for information only.

Contact: Sarah Goodman, Armed Forces Team, Surrey County Council, Tel 07581 337394 or email armedforces@surreycc.gov.uk

1	Welcome and Apologies	Chair	(Verbal Report)
2	Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising	Chair	(Pages 3 - 8)
3	Health Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update by Surrey and Borders Partnership Trust on mental health services Update on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 	Susan Tilley James Palmer	(Verbal Report)
4	Royal Alexandra and Albert School A presentation on how the school supports Service children	Morgan Thomas	(Verbal Report)
5	HQSE and Task Force Commander Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HQSE The Soldier Academy Irish Guards 	Col Dave Kenny Lt Col Mike Bysshe Capt Paul Cody	(Verbal Report)
6	Recognise and Remember <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans for D-Day80 https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/d-day-80 and https://youtu.be/poAsxgmT0wE 	Brig Paul Evans Peter Bruinvels	(Verbal Report)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Armed Forces Week Veteran Hubs and Saw Mill 	Sarah Goodman	
7	SERFCA Update	Col Patrick Crowley	(Verbal Report)
8	Surrey Armed Forces Conference Debrief, Feedback and Annual Report	Peter Bruinvels Sarah Goodman	(Pages 9 - 24)
9	General Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National work and next steps for the Armed Forces Act Covenant Fund Trust https://covenantfund.org.uk/programmes/ Armed Forces Awareness Training Forces Connect app 	Peter Bruinvels Sarah Goodman	(Verbal Report)
10	AOB	Chair	(Verbal Report)
11	Date of next meeting 10am-12pm Thursday 24 October 2024	Chair	(Verbal Report)

Board Members

Canon Peter Bruinvels	SCC Civilian Military Liaison Advisor
Supt Tom Budd	Surrey Police
Capt Paul Cody	1st Battalion Irish Guards
Col Patrick Crowley	SERFCA
Brigadier Paul Evans DL	Recognise and Remember Task Group
Saj Hussain	Chair
Sqn Ldr Bryan Jones	ssafa
Lt Col Michael Bysse	Army Training Centre (Pirbright)
Col David Kenny	HQSE
Richard Moore	HQSE
Michael More-Molyneux	Lord-Lieutenant
Daniel Mouawad	Surrey Chief Executives
Tony Popham	Surrey Leaders
Louise Punter	Surrey Chambers of Commerce
Capt Samuel Richards	Garrison Representative
Anthony Shipley	Surrey Heartlands
Ellie Vesey-Thompson	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner



SURREY CIVILIAN-MILITARY PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 11 October 2023 at Army Reserve Centre, Farnham

Present:

Saj Hussain	Chair
Canon Peter Bruinvels	SCC Civilian Military Liaison Advisor
Lt Col Michael Bysshe	ATC Pirbright
Supt Tom Budd	Surrey Police
Capt Paul Cody	1st Battalion Irish Guards
Paul Evans	Recognise and Remember Task Group
Lt Col (Retd) Peter Ellis QGM	SERFCA
Sarah Goodman	Surrey County Council
Sqn Ldr Bryan Jones	SSAFA
Col David Kenny	HQSE
Maggie Mackie	Surrey County Council
Daniel Mouawad	Surrey Chief Executives
Andrea Newman	SCC Director of Communications & Engagement
Capt Sam Richards	Army Training Centre (Pirbright)
James Palmer	Surrey Heartlands
Ellie Vesey-Thompson	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Ben Wisdom	Surrey Police

Apologies:

Nanu Chumber-Stanley	Surrey County Council
Col Patrick Crowley	SERFCA
Michael Hayman	Surrey Leaders
Richard Moore	11 Infantry Brigade
Michael More-Molyneux	Lord Lieutenant
Anthony Shipley	Surrey Heartlands
Louise Punter	Surrey Chambers of Commerce

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES [Item 1]

Chair Saj Hussain welcomed all to the meeting, especially those new to the Board. Apologies were noted as above.

2 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING [Item 2]

- Further to discussions at last SCMPB meetings Active Surrey has been linked with HQSE and ATC Pirbright to find opportunities to work together going forward. ATC awaiting dates from Active Surrey to support some young people at Pirbright.
- Covenant funding was promoted to schools, but no bids have been successful. The criteria was quite restrictive as 40% service children needed and Surrey schools would need to bid together due to the distribution / spread of service children in the county.
- Care homes in Surrey have been written to with information about veteran hubs, the Forces Connect App and training available. One has since been in touch inviting veterans to their local remembrance Sunday lunch.
- SSAFA Caseworkers and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers have been promoted through SCC intranet. We are aware of two people who have contacted cadets re adult volunteering.
Will continue to promote.
Suggestion that a cadet (could be police and army) can come and speak to council meeting in the New Year to try and promote the opportunity.

3 JOINT STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND CENSUS DATA [Item 3] Board received a presentation from James Palmer – Surrey Heartlands

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) identifies and describes the health, care and well-being needs of the population in Surrey. This is used to inform the prioritisation and planning of health and social care services to meet those needs.

The JSNA uses a 'chapter' structure, looking at the needs around a specific area of health and social care including priority populations. A chapter for the Armed Forces Community is proposed and support and input from the SCMPB was sought to ensure it is as effective as possible.

Key points raised:

- This chapter is for the entire Armed Forces Community.
- Help requested to connect with armed forces communities and the voluntary sector to capture their voices.
- Plan is to form a small working group - would like to include a lead from the armed forces and voluntary sector. .
- The Surrey JSNA is locally focused, but each area will have one. It was agreed it would be helpful to create a chapter that has the potential to be adapted and adopted by other areas if feasible.
- Census data has helped provide greater insight regarding veterans living in Surrey. It was mentioned that knowing how many military pensions are being drawn in the county may also be helpful – these may be being collected by family of those who have served as well as veterans.

Action: Col David Kenny to speak with Chief of Defence team regarding any broader strategies being discussed and will feedback.

Action: Andrea Newman to be part of the working group. Meeting to be arranged to discuss this further.

Action: James Palmer to speak with SSAFA re how to capture input from armed forces community and voluntary sector.

Action: Include relevant links for reference within minutes (below):

- [Armed Forces Covenant Duty Statutory Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/armed-forces-covenant-duty-statutory-guidance)
- [Relationship between health and residential moves - The Health Foundation](#) (link to discussion about education and impact of moving).

Veterans' strategy:

- [Strategy for our veterans - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/strategies/strategy-for-our-veterans)
- [Veterans' Strategy Action Plan: 2022 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/strategies/veterans-strategy-action-plan-2022-to-2024)
- [Strategy for our Veterans - 6 monthly Report - August 2023 \(HTML\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

4 SUICIDE PREVENTION IN THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY [Item 4]

Canon Peter Bruinvels shared presentation from Nanu Chumber-Stanley with the Board (attached – Annex 1)

Suicide prevention work is going on across the county and this includes the Armed Forces. Key points raised in the discussion that followed:

- Andy Man clubs work in a similar way to Men in Sheds but are specifically around suicide prevention.
Action: Identify if there are any running in Surrey and share details with Board. [Find your nearest group | Andy's Man Club \(andysmanclub.co.uk\)](https://www.andysmanclub.co.uk). There is a club operating in Woking.
- It was suggested that a link be made with Surrey Search and Rescue team as they are often called out for attempted suicides.
Action: Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to share relevant contact details.
- Data:
 - It would be interesting to know if there was a difference in suicide rates between reservists and regular forces
 - Care needs to be taken when interpreting data. The fact someone has served does not automatically mean that their service had an impact on the suicide.
- It was noted that the Military has a Mental Fitness course. It is mandatory that someone from each unit attends.
Action: Col Dave Kenny to look in to provision of Assist Training.

5 SERVICE CHILDREN UPDATE [Item 5]

Board received an update from Maggie Mackie regarding the attainment of Service Children in Surrey schools. Key data was shared with board ahead of the meeting (Annex 2)

It was noted that generally service children are performing well, particularly Early Years and Key Stage 1 (infant). By the end of Key Stage 2 (junior) there is a dip.

There is currently a focus in Surrey schools looking at ways to improve the outcomes for children with an additional challenge, which may include being a service child, as they are currently not performing as well in Surrey as the national average.

Ofsted are currently analysing the ways Service Pupil Premium funding is being spent in schools nationally to support military children with an aim to share best practice.

Discussion held around the impact of moving schools regularly and the choice being made – assisted by shifts in military policy – for families to remain in one place and the person serving to move if needed.

It was agreed that narrative is needed alongside the data in order to provide an accurate picture.

Action: Maggie to drill down further in to the data and provide the board with an overview of changes to attainment over the past ten years.

ROYAL ALEXANDER AND ALBERT SCHOOL

Following a visit to the school Saj Hussain provided the Board with an overview of Royal Alexander and Albert School in Surrey.

A state boarding school which currently has 180 service children it is keen to build on its strong connection to the military.

A number of service children from the school will be attending a Passing Off Parade at Pirbright ATC in the near future and they have set up an Armed Forces Group which will meet regularly with Peter Bruinvels.

6 HQSE AND TASK FORCE COMMANDER UPDATES [Item 6]

HQSE:

The Chair welcomed Col Dave Kenny to the Board. Col Kenny provided a verbal overview of the armed forces and changes relating to Surrey and South East.

There are two key functions for the Armed Forces, fighting and support. HQSE's role is support. It has four key outputs:

- Supporting the lived experience of soldiers
- Connecting with wider society through engagement
- Adult Volunteers – supporting and enabling these key people
- Promote and expand the MOD Employer Recognition Scheme.

Continuing to work in partnership with SERFCA.

An update detailing local engagement work in schools had been shared with the Board ahead of the meeting.

ATC Pirbright

Lt Col Michael Bysshe was welcomed to the Board and provided a verbal update of changes at ATC Pirbright.

Major infrastructure changes continue to support the transition to officially becoming Soldier Academy in 2024. Looking forward to the opening of the Alexander Soldier Centre on the base in 2024.

Soldiers will receive all non-combat training at Pirbright. Combat training will take place at Catterick.

It was noted that the numbers of personnel at Pirbright will not change dramatically as a result of the planned changes.

Irish Guards

Apologies were received from Capt Paul Cody.

7 SURREY POLICE ARMED FORCES SUPPORT GROUP [Item 7]

Ben Wisdom spoke to the Board about his work within Surrey Police to promote links between the Force the Armed Forces. Strong belief in the value and transferable skills of those who have previously served.

Work includes:

- Internal support – a network for those working within the police who have previously served.
- External support such as visiting barracks
- Recognition and recruitment – looking to promote the option of working for the police when you leave service and to ensure the value of the skills they can bring are recognised by the force.

Each police force has an Armed Forces lead, but at the moment there is a lack of central direction from the Home Office in this area.

Action: Canon Peter Bruinvels to raise this with the Home Office.

Action: Ellie Vesey-Thompson to brief Chief Officer of Surrey Police.

8 SERFCA UPDATE [Item 8]

The Board received written and verbal updates on the work of SERFCA as attached to the minutes (Annex 3A and 3B)

An invitation was also extended at the meeting for members to attend events or camps to see what the cadets are doing. It was felt that some members of the Board would welcome the chance to visit the annual camp.

Action: Details of the annual camp to be circulated when appropriate.

Action: Peter Ellis to link with Ben Wisdom regarding supporting Police Cadets.

9 RECOGNISE AND REMEMBER UPDATE [Item 9]

A written update from Brigadier Paul Evans is attached to the minutes (Annex 4)

10 GENERAL UPDATES [Item 10]

MOD CONFERENCE

Peter Bruinvels and Sarah Goodman attended the annual MOD Conference in Newcastle in September 2023. A report has been attached to these minutes (Annex 5)

SURREY ARMED FORCES COVENANT CONFERENCE

Date and venue of next conference confirmed as Thursday 7 March 2024 at ATC Pirbright.
Further details to be circulated in due course.

HMS Kent

An opportunity to visit HMS Kent was greatly appreciated by all who attended. Much was learned and links with the Navy were strengthened.

Unity Welfare Officer Meeting

Very positive meeting held on Mon 25 Sept 2023 bringing together Welfare Officers and partners from local authorities and relevant organisations to discuss issues affecting the Armed Forces Community in Surrey.

11 AOB [Item 11]

LGBTQ Report – it was suggested members of the Board should read these reports.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lgbt-veterans-independent-review> and
https://researchportal.northumbria.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/102341398/2023_Lost_and_Found_The_LGBT_Veteran_Community_and_the_Impacts_of_the_Gay_Ban.pdf

Armed Forces Covenant Fund

Please help promote this fund [Programmes - Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust](#)

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 12]

10am – 12pm, Thursday 18 April 2024 – Woodhatch

Meeting ended at: 12.00 pm

Feedback Summary

Surrey Armed Forces Covenant Conference 2023

7 March 2024 – ATC Pirbright

Brief Summary:

- A brilliant response when the date was announced. Over 190 people had registered to attend the conference before the agenda was announced.
- The EDI theme of the day was felt to be sensitively and constructively handled.
- The additional time for networking built in to the day was positively received. More stands than in previous years and all were well attended.
- The team at Pirbright were outstanding and instrumental in the day running so smoothly.

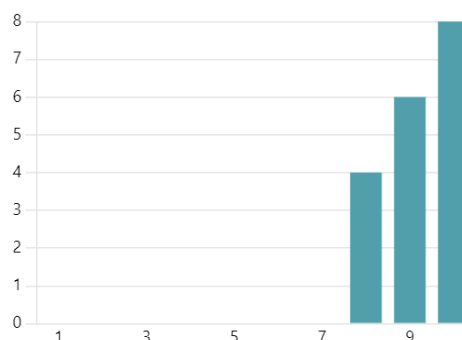
Some of the feedback received via email:

- Good to see our community come together to share such real insights – remarkably educational.
- It was an impressive event. The proceedings, general organisation, and catering were all very good.
- Such an amazing day with beautiful people.
- It was a fantastic day. Thoroughly informative and thank you so much for inviting me to speak.
- As ever I learned more than I imparted and was particularly impressed with the Pirbright Team and Caroline's excellent briefing.
- Thanking you for a most interesting, informative and enjoyable visit to Surrey Armed Forces Covenant Conference. I realise what a load of hard work goes into organising and hosting this event – so please accept my thanks and appreciation for you to you and your colleagues.
- The best ever, I learned so much. An outstanding day - very well organised – excellent speakers.

Responses via online Feedback Form (18 responses):

How informative did you find the Surrey Armed Forces Covenant Conference? Please allocate a mark out of ten by choosing the relevant number below?

9.22
Average Rating



What key point did you take away with you from the conference?

Inclusion matters. We can all make changes to be more inclusive and support those who serve.

How collaborative the county is.

Inclusivity

the variety of supporting agencies that are available

The diversity of the British Army today compared to the 70's, 80's and 90's

The strong and passionate support that Surrey provides to veterans

I really enjoyed inclusion before diversity presentation and hope to develop a similar presentation internally. Also for the carer's presentation 'think of their 5-9 before you think of their 9-5'

Many, but if I had to choose it would be around how much progress the army has made with inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice.

The honest and thought provoking way the speakers explained their emotional and physical journeys, highlighting the real, albeit slow, progress that has been made, which must continue.

How the armed forces has become more inclusive

the scope of people in the armed forces

I was not aware of Forces Connect, to help navigate the multiple services for people that have served

Diversity and inclusion

E & D and how we may have moved on but not enough

The Army's journey so far

Further insight into the personal accounts from serving and ex-serving armed forces and how my organisation can support in relation to the Armed Forces Covenant.

The work already being undertaken, which I was not aware of, around the importance of inclusion and diversity at Pirbright and the wider army in the South East. The day highlighted well the experiences and challenges faced by serving personnel due to their background, and what they have had to do to overcome these best they can. Really informative and interesting day.

We would really value your feedback and input. Please share below your suggestions or improvements for next years' conference.

More of the same!

Success stories from veterans who are being supported by various charities and organisations.

The event ran very well. Great motivational speakers, time for networking.

I can't think of any major improvements. Maybe it would be good to have a section on the opportunity open to volunteer with the NHS?

All good

The location is hard to get to, in the middle of no where, no hotels, excludes people with no id and is so hard with people who do not drive

I was looking forward to 'coping with and overcoming diversity' but the content didn't really follow that (although it was still very good!)

It was excellent, the room was very hot but otherwise everything was well organized.

Thought the whole day was perfect although I must admit the main room was a little warm

The entire day was amazing! There is only one tiny thing and that is how hot it gets in the upper rows, perhaps leave both doors open next time to get a bit of air flow. An extra big shout out to Caroline who spoke from Fighting with Pride, incredible person feels like the understatement of the year. Very large well done to everyone involved!!

A good day all round. Shared a lot of information in the networking breaks. Maybe not so long a queue for the tea somehow as it seemed to waste valuable time. I managed to connect with a lot of people who had previously only been 'names' on an email and it's given me a few ideas moving forward. My special interest are 'Veteran's Hubs' so it was interesting to see a short film there.

Bacon rolls on arrival 😊

It would be great to see if other key areas have been discussed to be included in the AFC, such as social services and any further housing options my team can refer to / access.

Perhaps opportunity for part of the day to be split in to small, seminar style sessions where there is a wider discussion on specific topics.

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DRAFT Surrey Civilian-Military Partnership Board

Armed Forces Annual Report – April 2023 – March 2024

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Foreword

As Chairman of Surrey CMPB, I am really pleased and proud of all the successes that have been achieved across Surrey. It has been yet another very eventful year with so much happening!

I would highlight a brilliant Reserves Day at Surrey County Council HQ in Woodhatch supported by 4PWRR and 579 EOD with Col Mark Siebenaller, Deputy Commander – Reserves, 11 SFA Brigade and HQ SE. The event was well supported both SCC Reserves and well as ex-service working with Surrey Fire & Rescue and Surrey Police. The event also staged hands-on weapons display by 4 Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment based in Farnham.

Another highlight was attending and then inspecting 120 recruits at a Passing Off Parade at Army Training Centre Pirbright. I was also pleased to attend the Surrey Army Cadet Force Annual Camp Crowborough where I had the opportunity to meet cadets from across Surrey - I am now promoting Cadet Force Adult Volunteers at Surrey CC.

I am proud that Surrey CC continues to raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant through the successful Armed Forces Awareness Training led by the Covenant Lead Officer

across Surrey. This and the Surrey County Council sponsored Forces Connect App really helps directly support Surrey residents who are part of our Armed Forces community ensuring they can access services and support as required.

But the icing on the cake was no doubt for me was last September when members of the SCMPB were invited to join HMS Kent in Portsmouth Royal Naval Dockyard for a tour of the Type 23 Frigate – HMS Kent which is part of the escort party for Queen Elizabeth Aircraft Carrier – an experience I will never forget. This gave board members useful insight into Naval life and how this can impact on family members, a number of whom live in Surrey.

Here in Surrey, we are most fortunate to enjoy excellent working relationships with the Army Training Centre Pirbright and especially its Commanding Officer – Lt Col Michael Bysse; 1 Irish Guards and of course, Col David Kenny – Commander, HQ SE as well as with Col Patrick Crowley from SERFCA.

We also work closely with 4 Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and its Commanding Officer – Lt Col Steve Garmory and with 579 Field Squadron (EOD) and Major Duncan Wood. These are excellent and fruitful partnerships which really underline the fact that Surrey is very much a Military county, widely respected by the Ministry of Defence.

One of the undoubted benefits of being Chair of Surrey County Council is that I am also Chair of Surrey Civilian-Military Partnership Board and I must say that it has been one of the most enjoyable parts of the role as I attend and participate in so many Military activities and am really getting to know and to understand the Military. It has made me 'armed forces aware' and given me the confidence to represent them and their interests at the highest level.

Having now be in post for ten months, I continue to be filled with pride and with all that has been achieved to date including Surrey CC continuing to be a Gold Award holder of the Employers Recognition Scheme. Our partners like me stand committed to ensure that no member of the armed forces community is disadvantaged because of their service. If anything, all our partners and our Board Members are now even more aware of the ultimate sacrifice that our armed forces are prepared to pay to keep Britain and Surrey safe and free.

Saj Hussain

Chairman of Surrey Civilian-Military Partnership Board

Introduction

The 2023-24 annual report sets out some of the key achievements of the Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board and its partners to help ensure members of the Armed Forces community are not disadvantaged by their services. Partners on the SCMPB include the Lord-Lieutenant, Army Headquarters South East, Army Training Centre (Pirbright), 1st Battalion Irish Guards, South East Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (SERFCA), Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, borough and district councils, Surrey Police, Service Charities and our partners in health, education and business.

Engagement

Surrey Civilian-Military Partnership Board

Following his appointment in May 2023, the Chair of Surrey County Council Saj Hussain took over as Chair of Surrey Civilian-Military Partnership Board. Issues progressed by the Board during the year included planning for a new chapter within the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on the needs of Surrey's Armed Forces community, addressing the educational attainment of service children and exploring specific actions around suicide prevention within Surrey's strategy as well as updates on the priorities of the Army in the South East, the development of the Army Training Centre (Pirbright) into the new Soldiers Academy (South) and the work of the Reserves and Cadets within Surrey.

Surrey Military Appeals Committee (SMAC)

SMAC brings together lead representatives from the Military, Civic, media, politics, service charities and business to encourage and support the Armed Forces and the service charities. During the year it met three times under the chairmanship of Mr Michael More-Molyneux – Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey and for the first time had an external speaker from Reading Force, which provides service children with books whilst their parent is absent on deployment or training, to brief them.

Local Civil-Military Panels

SCC is pleased to be represented on all the local Civil-Military Panels in Guildford, Surrey Heath and Woking and also whenever the North Surrey Runnymede and Spelthorne Partnership meets. Matters discussed include Remembrance Services, Freedom Parades and welfare support as well as strengthening local links with the Armed Forces community.

Surrey Leaders and Chief Executives

During the year SCC officers briefed Surrey Leaders and Surrey Chief Executives on the Armed Forces Covenant and the impact of the Armed Forces Act 2021 as well as encouraging their boroughs and districts to move forward to apply for silver or gold as part of the MoD Employers Recognition Scheme Awards. SCC officers also are mentoring councils such as Runnymede as they aim for the Gold Award.

All-Party Armed Forces Covenant Parliamentary Group

The Covenant Lead Officer remains Armed Forces Champion and Covenant Lead to the All-Party Armed Forces Covenant Parliamentary Group and often uses examples from Surrey as best practice in his presentations to the APPG.

National Armed Forces Covenant Conference

As in previous years, SCC was represented at the MoD National Armed Forces Covenant Conference in Newcastle. A keynote address was given by Dr Andrew Murrison MP and Armed Forces Covenant and Veterans Minister on the state of the Armed Forces Covenant and the widening of the Statutory Provisions to include spousal employment. Surrey's Covenant Lead was privileged to lead a session on education and how to ensure that service children are not disadvantaged by their frequent moves and changes in their curriculums.

SERFCA AGM and County Committee

SERFCA hosted the SERFCA County Briefing at RMA Sandhurst in June for Mayors, Armed Forces Champions, businesses and other key leaders in the community. In December the SERFCA Committee took place with top level and in-depth briefing on all activities over the past 12 months by both Regular and Reserve Units as well as from Surrey's Armed Forces

Champions. The briefing was held at the Farnham Reserve Centre where 4PWRR have a Reserve Company.

[Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey Awards Evening and Ceremony](#)

The Lord-Lieutenant's annual awards ceremony, organised by SERFCA, was held at Guildford Cathedral in October. Meritorious awards went to a number of long time Reservists from 4 Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment headquartered in Redhill with its main Reserve Unit in Farnham, as well as Cadet Force Adult Volunteers from all three Services. The evening also saw His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant Cadets appointed from all three Services as well as a front-line briefing on the Army and its commitments today from the Commanding Officer of Headquarters South East.

[SSAFA AGM](#)

The SSAFA Surrey AGM took place in Guildford under the chairmanship of Sqn Ldr Bryan Jones. Lt Gen Sir Andrew Gregory – Controller – SSAFA was the guest speaker who reported on the regionalisation of the SSAFA Operation which will be run as the SE Region with the existing County Branch structure under review. Surrey's Covenant Lead Officer also provided a training session on Armed Forces Awareness Training and the Armed Forces Act 2021.

[HMS Kent](#)

In September members of both the SCMPB and SMAC were invited to join HMS Kent in Portsmouth Royal Naval Dockyard for a tour of the Type 23 Frigate – HMS Kent which is part of the escort party for Queen Elizabeth Aircraft Carrier. Members received a confidential briefing on the capabilities of HMS Kent from the Executive Officer including its anti-submarine operations and combat procedures and gained a greater understanding of life in the Royal Navy and a greater appreciation of the impact that naval life has on families that we support here in Surrey.

[His Majesty's Massed Bands of the Royal Marines](#)

Building on the relationship developed during the year with the Royal Navy, officers were delighted to attend HM Massed Bands of the Royal Marines Christmas Spectacular as well as a special event held at Dorking Halls in February 2024. The events gave the opportunity to build closer links with the Royal Navy HQ London and Eastern England team based at HMS President.

[Recruits Passing Off Parade at Pirbright](#)

The Chair of Surrey County Council was accompanied by Officers from the Armed Forces Team to a Passing Off Parade for 120 recruits at Army Training Centre Pirbright. As part of an ongoing piece of work with the Royal Alexandra and Albert School in Reigate, 15 Service children and their teachers were also invited to attend. The Chair was honoured to be part of the inspection of the recruits alongside the Brigadier.

[SCMPB Annual Armed Forces Covenant Conference](#)

On 7 March 2024 the team held its very successful annual Armed Forces Covenant conference at the Army Training Centre (Pirbright), now renamed The Soldier Academy. Over 160 people attended the event including the Lord-Lieutenant, High Sheriff, Mayors, military, businesses, health, SCC, district and borough councils, Police, fire, and veterans, which was chaired by Saj Hussain in his capacity as Chair of Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board.

The theme of the conference was EDI and delegates heard from a wide range of inspirational speakers covering the issues facing Foreign, Commonwealth and Overseas armed forces personnel and their families both first hand from a female soldier from St Vincents and from the Army Multicultural Network. They also heard from Caroline Paige, Chief Executive of Fighting with Pride, who joined the RAF in January 1980 serving 35 years as a navigator on fast jets and battlefield helicopters. In February 1999 she became the first openly serving transgender officer in the British Armed Forces and she spoke about the issues she faced, the impact of the gay ban, and the support Fighting with Pride provides to those impacted. Jonny Holloway, who recently starred on the BBC show Traitors explained how his life was instantly changed when his leg was blown off by an IED whilst serving in Afghanistan, and how he coped with the support of service charities. Other speakers included SCC and MoD colleagues exploring the support available to carers, and the Head of HR from CGI who talked about their relationship with Defence. Feedback from the day was wholly positive with organisations leaving the day considering how they can become more inclusive. Surrey County Council is currently looking at how we can remove some of the disadvantages that ex-service personnel face by considering guaranteed interviews for appropriately qualified candidates seeking employment.

Armed Forces Awareness Training

The Covenant Lead Officer has led Armed Forces Awareness Training on both the Covenant and Armed Forces Act 2021 across Surrey at both in person and online sessions. These sessions have been interactive and very well supported by the many new Elected Councillor Armed Forces Champions, Covenant Lead Officers, Adult Social Care, Education, Housing, Surrey Police, Surrey Fire & Rescue, Age UK, Service Charities and the Boroughs and Districts as well as by the Military themselves.

BSL Signed Awareness Raising video for training

Last year a combined Armed Forces Awareness Training Course for both Armed Forces Champions, their Officers and Front-line and Contact Centre Staff was filmed and had BSL signing added to ensure wide accessibility for the training. <https://youtu.be/dVpgy2KQfCI> and <https://youtu.be/HgkesEDq6Y8>. This was shared with the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust for onward sharing nationally through the Knowledge Network.

The Soldiers Academy (South)

Over the next few months, work will begin on a massive redevelopment of Pirbright Camp as it becomes The Soldiers Academy (South). This is a great endorsement of the current work being undertaken by Pirbright in training up to 7,500 recruits a year. SCC Officers are supporting ATC Pirbright, as well as liaising with the local MPs and the borough councils involved.

Employment

SERFCA Gold Employer Recognition Scheme Workshop

In January 2024, SERFCA arranged two Gold Workshops for Local Authorities and Businesses holding the Silver award and wishing to apply for the MoD Employers Recognition Gold Award. The Covenant Lead for Surrey led both sessions on Advocacy, as he will at the Sandhurst Leadership Luncheon this March in his role as Chair of the SE Gold Awards Association.

Reserves Day

As in previous years, Surrey County Council held its Annual Reserves Day in Woodhatch hosted by the Chair of SCC with Col Mark Siebenaller, Deputy Commander – Reserves, 11 SFA Brigade and HQ SE. The event was well supported both SCC Reserves and well as ex-service working with Surrey Fire & Rescue and Surrey Police. The event also staged hands-on weapons display by 4 Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment based in Farnham. At the end of the event, Saj Hussain presented Col Siebenaller with a County Shield in appreciation of his support for Surrey's Reserves and Surrey County Council over the years.

Social Value Market Place

Both Guildford and Woking veterans' hubs have benefited from generous donations through the Social Value Market Place initiative. To date, two tea urns and a generous amount of food vouchers have been donated providing great support to our local hubs.

SE REEG

SCC Officers continue to attend the twice-yearly South East Regional Employers Engagement Group (SE REEG) meetings where they are able to promote the good and exemplary work of Surrey including best practice and give excellent examples for case studies for onward transmission to the MoD and other silver and gold award holders.

Education and Young People

Supporting Service Children

Surrey County Council has established an Education Task and Finish Group ensuring that the new Covenant Duty is implemented within the authority. As well as the core elements of the duty, including admissions, attainment, transport SEN and Service Pupil Premium, the group is also considering the needs of the Early Years to ensure they too are not being disadvantaged by their parents service.

Surrey County Council is also an active member of the Ministry of Defence Local Authority Partnership (MODLAP) which is a partnership between the MOD and 18 English local authorities that have committed to work together to improve the experience and outcomes of children (both at early years and at school age) of UK Armed Forces families. The local authority membership of MODLAP represent those authority areas with the highest numbers of service children in England, of which Surrey is one.

Surrey Army Cadet Force Annual Camp

The Lord-Lieutenant, Chair of Surrey CC and Covenant Lead Officer were guests at this year Surrey ACF Annual Camp held in Crowborough. They had the opportunity to meet cadets from across Surrey. All cadets came across as both confident and assured with a number of them advising that they intended to join the Armed Forces through university entrance.

Along with the above three guests, a number of Surrey Mayors also attended and were personally briefed by the soon to retire Cadet Commandant – Col Mike Potter on both the amazing activities undertaken by Cadets but also the urgent need for Cadet Force Adult Volunteers across Surrey.

Partnership work with the Royal Alexandra and Albert School

Recognising that The Royal Alexandra and Albert School in Gatton Park has the largest number of service children (180 on roll) in Surrey a Service Children Peer Support Group

has been set up with both the Chair of SCC and Covenant Lead Officer as members. This Group will concentrate on making school life easier for service children with termly meetings to discuss issues of concern as well as termly visits to Passing-Out Events at ATC Pirbright with the first one taking place on 8 December 2023. A special Armed Forces Awareness presentation was also given to 96 members of staff at the school, with two interactive sessions involving all the boarding and teaching staff to help highlight some of the issues facing service families.

[Pirbright Crossing](#)

SCC Officers are involved in planning a re-routing of the pedestrian crossing and footways to and from Pirbright Camp for parents going to Pirbright School. Financial support has come from two County Councillor's Community Project funding, Pirbright Parish Council and the MoD. The work is expected to start soon.

[Promoting Covenant Funding Opportunities to Schools](#)

During the year an article was published in the school's bulletin promoting funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to schools with children from the Armed Forces – there are currently approximately 1,224 service children within Surrey schools.

[Health, Wellbeing and Welfare](#)

[Surrey Armed Forces Health Champions](#)

This Group met under the chairmanship of Surrey Heartlands where positive discussions were held around the increasing number of GP surgery's in Surrey accredited as Veteran Friendly. This is now slightly above the national average, as well as discussions around developing a new JSNA chapter focussing on the Armed Forces community to be developed in the new financial year.

[Veteran Friendly GP Practices](#)

During the past 12 months, there has been a significant growth in the number of Veteran Friendly GP practices across Surrey with many more keen to sign up to the scheme. There can be no doubting that Veterans and Ex-Service personnel greatly benefit from attending a GP Veteran Friendly Practice as they immediately feel at home and understood by the Practice.

[Forces Connect App](#)

Surrey County Council demonstrated its ongoing commitment to the Armed Forces community by continuing to sponsor the Forces Connect App for a second year. The app, which was developed as part of the Forces Connect South East project, signposts users to relevant support in just four clicks. Since its inception its reach has grown to cover many regions, with an increase of 15% over the past twelve months totally more than 22,500 users in the 33 Regions with Moray and Fife being the most recent to join. The App is about to be upgraded to make it available for use on PCs and laptops and with easier access for the devolved Regions.

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)

As part of the requirement of the Armed Forces Act 2021 and its recently enabled Statutory Guidelines requiring councils and other public bodies to show a duty of care in the provision of Education, Health and Housing services, Surrey County Council is working with colleagues

to develop a specific chapter on the Armed Forces community, focussing primarily on housing, healthcare, education and employment.

Veterans' hubs

Surrey's veterans' hubs continue to be well-supported as they offer a warm welcome and banter for like-minded veterans. Each continues to offer something different, and the three veterans' hubs hosted in Fire Stations have become a permanent fixture with the local Regiment at Pirbright supporting them by attending their monthly hubs. External speakers are also attending along with welfare providers and DWP. Fordbridge Hub celebrated its second anniversary on Tuesday 27 June 2023.

Armed Forces Week 2023 saw the launch of a new veterans' hub in Banstead – run by Royal British Legion and supported by Surrey County Council and Reigate & Banstead Borough Council. Two additional new hubs taking place in the evening have been established in Leatherhead and Tongham by Surrey and Borders Partnership Trust under the strap-line of 'Brew and Banter Drop-Ins'.

Armed Forces Breakfast Club at Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Ashford and St Peter's Hospital host a monthly Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club on the last Friday of every month at 10am in the Edu Kitchen. During Armed Forces week, the Veterans and Reservists of the Trust and attendees of the breakfast club were joined by The Mayor of Runnymede, The Chair of Surrey County Council and Dr Ben Spencer MP for Runnymede & Weybridge.

The event was well attended and full of banter, many regaling stories of their past exploits of their time in service. The breakfast club ensures this is a safe space for discussions. Ashford and St Peter's have been awarded Veterans Aware accreditation from the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA) and a Gold Employment Recognition Scheme accreditation for supporting employment for those who have served, their family members and those who continue to serve in the Armed Forces.

Norbury Park Sawmill

Surrey County Council's Armed Forces Team has been working with the SCC Countryside Team and the Youth Offer Team who welcomed seven veterans to the Norbury Park Sawmill on 1 March to carry out some volunteering with the team. They got involved in processing wood for the Forest Schools and really enjoyed the opportunity of being outdoors whilst getting to know fellow ex-service personnel. The session was such a success that it has been agreed that it will be repeated on the first Friday of each month going forward, thereby supporting the values of the SCMPB and the wellbeing of our veterans.

Collaboration with Surrey's Unit Welfare Officers

A meeting set up, convened and chaired by SCC was held with all Army Unit Welfare Officers across Surrey and beyond– key issues discussed included housing, education, early years provision, employment and suicide prevention. The takeaway for the UWOs was to manage the expectations of the Armed Forces family who had higher expectations what they thought the Covenant could do rather than what it actually does.

Volunteers Week

As part of Volunteers Week (1-7 June) the Surrey Armed Forces Team promoted some amazing opportunities to SCC staff including a campaign on social media to encourage more people to consider becoming a Cadet Force Adult Volunteers. More volunteers are

desperately needed to enable a wide range of activities and opportunities for young people to continue and expand.

Noting that the Armed Forces Charity SSAFA is seeking Volunteer Caseworkers to provide invaluable support to those in need, Surrey County Council also promoted the SSAFA caseworker vacancies again on social media.

Remembrance

Remembrance events across Surrey

Remembrance events were held at various locations across the county. The Chair of Surrey County Council led the service at Woodhatch Place with representatives from the ABF, Royal British Legion and SSAFA in attendance along with Reservists and Veterans from Surrey Fire and Rescue.

A further special service of Remembrance and the Last Post was held for veterans at Guildford Fire Station on Armistice Day attended by Guildford Veterans and Surrey Fire and Rescue with the Covenant Lead Officer taking the service after an afternoon reception and tea party.

The County Remembrance Sunday Service was held at Guildford Cathedral on Remembrance Sunday with both the Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey, Chair of Surrey as well as the High Sheriff being in attendance. Remembrance Sunday Services were also held across Surrey with reported record large attendances in Dorking led by the recently retired Bishop of Kingston.

Armed Forces Day Flag raising

As in previous years, Armed Forces Week began with the Annual Surrey Joint Services' Charities Choral Mattins at Guildford Cathedral with a After the flag-raising by the Lord-Lieutenant, the march-past and inspection by the Lord-Lieutenant, High Sheriff and SCC Chair went really well.

Armed Forces Week

Surrey joined the nation in marking Armed Forces Week which ran from 19-24 June - holding a number of events to publicly thank the Armed Forces for their outstanding contribution and sacrifice. These included Surrey's Joint Services' Charities Choral Mattins at Guildford Cathedral, which saw a record turn-out of tri-service and police cadets, as well as a larger than usual number of parents joining the service, along with events at Woodhatch Place and district and borough Civic Offices, with Flag Raising on the Monday and Reserves Day on the Wednesday.

Merdeka Day 2023

On 3rd September 2023 the Surrey Branch of the National Mayala Borneo Veteran held an event at the West Clandon Royal British Legion. The event was to remember those who are still there and celebrating the Malayan Independence on August 31, 1957. The event was attended by the Mayor of Guildford Councillor Masuk Miah, The National President Tex Pemberton OBE, as well as thirty-five members and guests. What made this event special for the Surrey members was that members from the Solent branch joined, making a true gathering of likeminded veterans. The afternoon was spent enjoying good company, games, and good food. Ken Chandler explained the Missing Comrades table, which is a humble reminder to those friends and family that have been lost in conflicts around the globe. At the end of the event information was shared about other events nationally as well as information

on Veterans' Hubs within the Surrey Area, and further information on the Armed Forces Covenant and the help that is available to those in need.

[Dunkirk Veteran - Douglas Edward Philips \(Ted\)](#)

Sgt Ted Philips of the East Surrey Regt was the 11th oldest man in Britain at the time of his death, he was also a survivor of Dunkirk. Collaboration from partners within the SCMPB achieved a fitting occasion for this old soldier, with his funeral cortege going through Addlestone.

[RBL Surrey Poppy Launch](#)

The launch of the Surrey Poppy Appeal was held at ATC Pirbright with the Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey and Lt Col Michael Bysshe - CO 1 ATR as guest speakers. Dame Penelope Keith recited 'In Flanders Field'. SCC was represented by the Chair of SCC and supporting officers.

[Surrey Employer Recognition Scheme 2023 Award Holders](#)

[Surrey Silver and Gold Awards 2023](#)

The following companies received their Gold Award in 2023:

BAM Nuttall

Combat Stress

Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust

The following companies received their Silver Award in 2023

Aspris Children's Services Ltd

Frazer-Nash Consultancy Ltd

McCarthy Bainbridge Ltd

Mole Valley DC

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey

Peter Bruinvels Associates ('PBA')

Surrey & Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Surrey & Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

Surrey Police

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